United Nations A/HRC/37/NGO/197

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 March 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh session
26 February-23 March 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by IT for Change, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[9 March 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-03686(E)
1803686

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Privacy in the Internet Age

This statement is on behalf of the Just Net Coalition.

All people have the right to privacy, and to use the Internet without mass surveillance. This is critically important for the future of humanity, and the violations of this right pose an urgent threat to democracy, and to the right to freedom of discrimination on the basis of religion, and to other human rights. We therefore welcome and strongly support the initiative of the Special Rapporteur on Privacy in regard to a corresponding Legal Instrument.

In addition, we emphasize another aspect of privacy. Privacy is not only about being able to keep some information and conversations strictly confidential. There is also the larger scale of the privacy of a social group, even if that group is not meeting and communicating in strict secrecy. In our view, personal and social data must belong respectively to the relevant individuals and social groups. Necessary policy frameworks to operationalise effective control and ownership of digital data must be developed.